Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Message Text

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ORIGIN PA-02

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AF-10 ARA-10 EA-10 EUR-12 NEA-10
MMO-01 SIG-03 USIE-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 INR-10
NSAE-00 SS-15 SP-02 /099 R

DRAFTED BY PA:JMEDEIROS:SAC
APPROVED BY PA - HODDING CARTER III
----------007835 161517Z /43
R 161453Z MAR 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO ALL DIPLOMATIC POSTS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN

SUBJECT: RELEASE OF INFORMATION IN PRESS BRIEFINGS

1. PURPOSE OF THIS CABLE IS TO INFORM POSTS OF NEW PROCEDURE IN EFFECT AT DEPARTMENT'S DAILY PRESS BRIEFING. PROCEDURE IN QUESTION IS DESIGNED TO INCREASE DEPARTMENT'S OPENNESS IN DEALING WITH AMERICAN PRESS AND PUBLIC, AND IS IN RESPONSE TO NUMEROUS REQUESTS BY WASHINGTON PRESS CORPS.

2. UNDER NEW PROCEDURE, WHEN IT SEEMS USEFUL TO SPOKESMAN, HE WILL VOLUNTEER INFORMATION DEPARTMENT WAS PREPARED TO RELEASE ON CERTAIN TOPICS WHICH DID NOT ARISE IN COURSE OF QUESTIONING AT DAILY BRIEFING. ALL GUIDANCES SPOKESMAN POSSESSES WILL NOT NECESSARILY RECEIVE THIS TREATMENT, BUT MANY WILL.

3. DEPARTMENT HAS ENDEAVORED TO MAKE CLEAR TO PRESS CORPS AND WASHINGTON DIPLOMATIC OBSERVERS THAT RELEASE OF INFOR-
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MATION IN THIS FASHION DOES NOT REPEAT NOT INDICATE DEPARTMENT ATTACHES ANY UNUSUAL SIGNIFICANCE TO IT. RATHER, THIS IS A MEANS OF SIMPLIFYING THE SOMETIMES RIDICULOUS CAT-AND-MOUSE GAME PLAYED AT DAILY BRIEFINGS UNTIL REPORTERS ASK "RIGHT" QUESTION.

4. TEXT FOLLOWS OF HODDING CARTER'S REMARKS ON MARCH 13,

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1978, INTRODUCING NEW PROCEDURE. BEGIN TEXT: "I WANT TO MAKE ONE LITTLE HOUSEKEEPING ANNOUNCEMENT. I HAVE HAD SEVERAL CONFERENCES WITH SOME OF YOU INDIVIDUALLY AND, OVER THE PAST FOURTEEN MONTHS, SEVERAL RATHER FORMAL PRESENTATIONS FROM YOU ABOUT THE NEED FOR, IN EFFECT, CLEARING OUT THESE GUIDANCE BOOKS OF MATERIAL.

5. AS I HAVE DISCUSSED WITH YOU BEFORE, ONE OF THE PROBLEMS ABOUT OUR ADVANCING INFORMATION IS THE ASSUMPTION ON YOUR PART THAT IT TAKES ON A FORCE AND VALUE GREATER THAN IT WOULD IF YOU EXTRACTED IT FROM ME BY THE USUAL PROCEDURE. THEREFORE, I WILL FOLLOW THE USUAL PROCEDURE--FORWARD AT THE BEGINNING OF A BRIEFING THOSE THINGS WHICH WE ARE VOLUNTEERING FOR OBVIOUS REASONS OF STATE. THEN AFTER TWENTY-FIVE MINUTES OR THIRTY MINUTES, AND WE HAVE MOVED OUR WAY THROUGH WHAT SEEMS TO BE EVERYBODY'S IDEA OF THE ORDER OF THE DAY, I WILL ADVANCE SOME OTHER MATERIAL WHICH I WOULD JUST LIKE TO OFFER UP TO YOU IN THE INTEREST OF OPENNESS AND CANDOR IN CLEANING OUT MY GUIDANCE FILES.

6. THIS MAY OR MAY NOT WORK. WE WILL AT ANY RATE TRY IT, AND I WILL SEE HOW RAPIDLY I GET A PROTEST BACK FROM SOME EMBASSY ABOUT OUR HIGHLIGHTING A QUESTION OF GREAT SENSITIVITY WITHOUT BEING ASKED ABOUT IT.

7. IN ANY CASE THAT IS SOMETHING WE WILL TRY.
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8. Q. ARE YOU TRYING TO DRAW A DISTINCTION BETWEEN "THE STATE DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCED TODAY" AND SO FORTH AND SO ON, WHICH YOU OPEN THE BRIEFING WITH, AND "SUCH AND SUCH WAS SAID TODAY BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN," WHICH IS THE LATTER CATEGORY THAT WE ARE SUPPOSED TO HAVE ASKED ABOUT?

9. A. BASICALLY. I AM TRYING TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN MATERIAL WHICH I WOULD PUT FORWARD AT THE BEGINNING WHICH TAKES ON AN EMPHASIS BECAUSE I VOLUNTEERED IT AT THE BEGINNING. I AM JUST TELLING YOU THERE IS GOING TO BE A CATEGORIZATION OF INFORMATION, WHICH IS THAT WHICH YOU ALL DON'T THINK IS IMPORTANT ENOUGH TO ASK ME ABOUT, AND I DON'T THINK IS IMPORTANT ENOUGH TO ADVANCE AT THE BEGINNING BUT IS NEVERTHELESS SOMETHING THAT MAY BE IMPORTANT TO SOME OF YOU. I WILL TRY TO GET IT OUT THERE ABOUT 12:30. END OF TEXT. VANCE

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